Drill Press Table | Popular Woodworking Magazine

Another view of the drill-press table. Here I'm cutting pocket holes in a table apron.

Despite the fact that your drill press is designed mostly for poking holes in sheet metal, it has many uses in a woodshop. It's a mortiser, a spindle sander, it bores huge holes, and – of course – drills holes at perfect right angles to the table. Because the table on most drill presses is designed for metalworking, it's hardly suited for these tasks. So I built this add-on table with features that will turn your drill press into a far friendlier machine:

ROUT THE GROOVE The grooves for the T-slot track allow the fence to be used left-to-right and front-to-back on the table to take advantage of the built-in tilting feature of the existing table.

First, a fence that slides forwards and backwards as well as left and right on either side of the quill. This last feature also uses the drill press' tilting table feature with the auxiliary table for angled drilling.

Built-in stops (both left and right) that attach to the fence for repetitive procedures such as doweling or chain drilling for mortises.

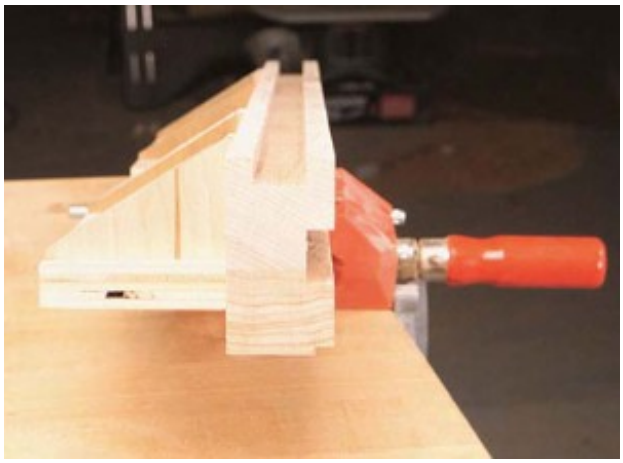
Hold-downs that can be used on the fence or on the table for any procedure.

RABBET FOR THE INSERT After cutting the hole with a jigsaw, the opening is rabbeted using a bearing-piloted router bit. Then chisel the corners square and fit the replaceable center tightly into the rabbet. Make a couple extras.

The sizes given in the Schedule of Materials are for a 14" drill press, with the center falling 9" from the rear edge of the table, with a 2" notch in the back to straddle the column. Adjust the center location and overall size of the table to match your particular machine.

Start With the Base-ics

The base platform for the table is made from 3/4" plywood, which should be void-free. Again, adjust the size as necessary to fit your drill press. First you need to get the table ready for the T-track, which is what holds the fence and hold-downs in place. Start by locating the four recessed holes that allow the T-slot mechanism to slip into the track without disassembling the mechanism. Each hole is 1-1/2" in diameter and 3/8" deep.



ROCK SOLID The fence is made of a sturdy, stable hardwood. Cut a groove the length of the top and face of the fence. The grooves support T-slot tracks, which can be used for stops, hold-downs and other accessories.

Next, locate the grooves in the center of the holes and use a router with a 3/4"-wide straight bit to cut the grooves to a 3/8" depth. The T-slot track should fit into the grooves with the top surface just below that of the plywood table. The grooves should be as parallel as possible to one another to allow smooth movement of the fence.

Replaceable Center

Now cut the hole for the 4" x 4" replaceable insert. First locate and mark the position centered on your table, then mark in from that line by 3/8" to locate your cutting line. Drill clearance holes in two corners of the square, then use a jigsaw to cut out the center piece. Next, determine the thickness of the material you will use for your insert (the 3/8"-thick Baltic Birch we used is actually metric and shy of 3/8") and set a 3/8" piloted rabbeting bit in a router to a height to hold the insert flush to the top surface of the table.